(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The quantum of 'iron ore' exported during the last three years is as follows:

(Qty: Million tonnes)

Year	Exports of iron ore
2002-03	48.02
2003-04	62.57
2004-05(p)	78.14

Source:- MMTC

P: provisional figures

(d) The life of iron ore reserves in India will be influenced by a number of factors such as rate of growth in mining activity; growth in demand for iron ore (which will depend on the growth of the steel industry); level and growth of exploration and prospecting activities; discovery of new reserves in new areas and in existing mines and the future approach towards inclusion of iron ore reserves with lower iron content. It is thus difficult to provide a firm estimate of the life of iron ore reserves. Ministry of Mines has, however, based on expected demand in 2020 for iron ore and the current reserves, estimated that the present reserves should suffice for 125 years.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) The present Foreign Trade Policy, for the period 2004-09, already prescribes canalization through Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Limited (MMTC) of export of iron ore of +64% Fe content from all sectors except ore of Goan and Redi origin. Besides, quantitative ceilings on export of high grade iron ore the Bailadila sector have also been prescribed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Central Tobacco Research Institute

1802. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the role of the Central Tobacco Research Institute;

(b) whether it is a fact that very little positive, constructive and useful research has come out of the CTRI in the last three years;

(c) the steps proposed to energise this body in the interest of the farmers; and

(d) the details of measures proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Central Tobacco Research Institute (CRTI) is conducting basic, applied, strategic and anticipatory research on different types of tabacco grown under varied agro-ecological situations in the country.

(b) No, Sir. The CRTI has developed ten new varieties and crop production and portection technologies such as integrated nutrient management, irrigation water management, modified barn for reducing cost of curing, integrated pest management, etc. during the last three years.

(c) and (d) Research programmes of CRTI have been reoriented to provide thrust on alternative use of tobacco, reduction of harmful substances like Tar, TSNA & pesticide residues, viable tobacco based cropping systems, organic farming , etc.. Needbased budget provisions have been made to conduct research on above programmes.

Venture capital fund

1803. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved Rs. 48 crores venture capital fund for agri-sector business;

(b) if so, whether this venture capital is accepted to provide much needed relief to farmers for whom one of the biggest hurdles has been lack of acess to easy credit;

(c) whether, in a recent National Sample Survey Organisation only 15 per cent farmers said that they had availed of any loan;

(d) whether, with this venture capital, they would be able to obtain bigger loans from banks and its processing will be easier; and